

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 02516 181932Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EB-08 /076 W
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R 181300Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1393
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONGEN GOMBAY
AMCONGEN CALCUTTA 9187
AMCONGEN MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2516

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IN
SUBJECT: LIMITED DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY AT PRESIDENT AHMED
FUNERAL

SUMMARY: WE HAVE THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT THERE WAS
VERY LITTLE HIGH LEVEL SUBSTANTIVE DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY
SURROUNDING THE EVENTS OF THE FUNERAL OF THE LATE PRESIDENT
AHMED. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO QUERY EVERY
EMBASSY WHOSE COUNTRY SENT A DELEGATION, OUR FINDINGS AT
THIS POINT INDICATE THAT FOR THE MAJORITY OF THOSE REPRESENTED
THEIR PRIMARY TASK WAS CEREMONIAL. THEY MET THEIR OBLIGATIONS,
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 02516 181932Z

DERIVED CONFLICTING IMPRESSIONS OF PRIME MINISTER GANDHI,
EXCHANGED WORDS OF CONDOLENCE, AND RETURNED HOME. ASIDE
FROM THE USDEL, THE PRIME MINISTER RECEIVED REPRESENTATIVES
FROM THE SOVIET UNION, UNITED KINGDOM, PAKISTAN, YUGOSLAVIA,
EGYPT, IRAN, AFGHANISTAN, AND BHUTAN. WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING
REPORTS BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSIES CONCERNED.
END SUMMARY.

1. THE SOVIET POLCOUNSELOR TELLS US HE BELIEVES THE GOI WAS DISAPPOINTED WITH THE SOVIET DELEGATION WHICH FOR THE FIRST TIME AT A HIGH LEVEL INDIAN STATE FUNERAL DID NOT INCLUDE THE SOVIET PRIME MINISTER. FIALKOVSKY SAID THAT, NEVERTHELESS, THE SOVIETS, VICE PRESIDENT N. M. MATCHANOF AND PRESIDUM SECRETARY M. P. GEORGADZE, WERE MET BY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER CHAVAN, AND LATER RECEIVED BY PRIME MINISTER GANDHI. FIALKOVSKY SAID THERE WAS NOTHING PARTICULARLY NEW TO DISCUSS IN THE SUBSTANTIVE AREA, SINCE THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD JUST CONCLUDED BILATERAL TALKS IN MOSCOW. ACCORDING TO FIALKOVSKY, THE SOVIET VISITORS CAME AWAY FROM THE MEETING WITH MRS. GANDHI WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT SHE WAS MORE WORRIED ABOUT OPPORTUNISM WITHIN THE CONGRESS PARTY THAN SHE WAS ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION. FIALKOVSKY ALSO SAID MRS. GANDHI TOLD HER SOVIET GUESTS THAT SHE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. SHE ALSO RECITED SOME OF HER DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT SHE COULD CONTINUE TO COUNT UPON SOVIET SUPPORT. DEPUTY FONMIN FIRYUBIN HAD NO SEPARATE INDEPENDENT PROGRAM ACCORDING TO FIALKOVSKY, AND DID NOT HAVE ANY TALKS AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

2. OUR BRITISH FRIENDS TELL US THAT LORD CHANCELLOR ELWYN JONES, PRINCE MICHAEL OF KENT, AND HIGH COMMISSIONER JOHN THOMSON, FOUND MRS. GANDHI LOOKING MORE TIRED AND DRAWN THAN THE PREVIOUS WEEK WHEN THOMSON HAD SEEN HER. SHE DECLINED TO FORECAST THE ELECTIONS ("WHO CAN TELL WHAT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 02516 181932Z

THE RESULTS WILL BE?"), BUT LATER SAID IT WOULD BE A DIFFICULT CONTESTS. SHE EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT POST-ELECTION POLITICAL MANEUVERINGS AND OVER A RETURN TO "CASTEISM" IN INDIAN POLITICS. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID SHE COULD NOT COMMIT HERSELF AT THIS TIME TO ATTEND A COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS' CONFERENCE. SHE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY SANJAY SHOULD BE AN ISSUE IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, AND EMBARKED ON A LONG EXPLANATION THAT HE HAD NOT RUN THE GOVERNMENT AS SOME HAD CONTENDED. THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED THAT AHMED'S DEATH HAD COME AT AN "AWKARD" TIME IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN BUT DID NOT ELABORATE ON THIS CRYPTIC COMMENT.

3. THE EGYPTIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, HAFEZ EL GHANEM, FOUND MRS. GANDHI VERY WORRIED ABOUT THE ELECTION AND UNSURE OF THE RESULTS. BY CONTRAST NEPAL PRIME MINISTER TULSI GIRI THOUGHT MRS. GANDHI APPEARED FULLY COMPOSED, AND GAVE NO INDICATION OF CONCERN ABOUT THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION. (SEE NEW DELHI 2445 NOTAL). YUGOSLAVIA'S

MIJATOVIC FOUND MRS. GANDHI OCCUPIED WITH ELECTION PROBLEMS, BUT NOT TO THE POINT OF BEING DISTRACTED OR OVERLY CONCERNED. (THE YUGOSLAV REPRESENTATIVE HIMSELF SUFFERED AN ATTACK OF KIDNEY STONES WHILE HERE, AND MADE NO CALLS OTHER THAN THE MINIMUM PRESCRIBED BY PROTOCOL REQUIREMENTS.) THE PAKISTANIS DID NOT HAVE ANY DISCUSSIONS, NOR DID THE INDONESIANS WE ARE TOLD BY THE RESPECTIVE POLITICAL COUNSELORS IN EACH EMBASSY.

4. ACCORDING TO THE DELHI PRESS, NCNA REPORTED FEB. 14 THAT PRC LEADER HUA UO-FENG HAD SENT A BRIEF MESSAGE TO MRS. GANDHI REQUESTING HER "TO ACCEPT THE DEEP CONDOLENCES OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT AND MYSELF AND CONVEY OUR SYMPATHY TO THE INDIAN PEOPLE AND THE BEREAVED FAMILY" OF PRESIDENT AHMED. CHINESE EMBOFF TOLD POLCOUNSELOR THAT THE ABSENCE OF A CHINESE DELEGATION FROM THE FUNERAL WAS IN KEEPING WITH CHINESE CUSTOM, AND SHOULD NOT BE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 NEW DE 02516 181932Z

INTERPRETED AS A NEGATIVE STEP IN SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS.
SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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